

# **Preferred Water Resource Information Sources and Learning Opportunities in the Pacific Northwest**

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The American public is overwhelmed by the amount of water resource information they are exposed to every day. The purpose of this 15-year study was to determine the information sources that are most widely used by the public and relay this information to water educators.

A mail-based survey process assessed: (1) public-preferred water information sources, (2) public-preferred learning opportunities, and (3) events that cause people to change their minds about a water issue. The same survey process was conducted in 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017 in all four Pacific Northwest states. The survey response rate exceeded 50%.

Only 14.8% of survey respondents considered the Internet a major water information source in 2002; however, by 2017 over 60% of adults were using the Internet for water information. The demographic factors of age and education level affected the usage of information sources. Visiting a web site was not considered an important learning opportunity in 2002 (11.5%); however, by 2017 over 80% of the public considered visiting a web site as their best learning opportunity for water information.

This study is important because it shows educators the best way to reach the public in the Pacific Northwest with water resource information.